

In this lesson Paul exhorts the disciples in Rome to live lives full of Christian dedication and virtue, overcoming evil with good. One hears strong echoes of Jesus' beatitudes. Also present is Paul's own emphasis on the central role of love together with the importance of a readiness to share in both the joy and sorrow of others. Blended with these teachings are some of the best of both Jewish and pagan ethical counsel. The apostle concludes with the insistence that revenge cannot be a motivation of Christians; final justice must be left to divine retribution.

And now the reading from Romans chapter 12

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 'Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

## Matthew 16:21-28

In the gospel reading Jesus teaches Peter and the other disciples that the way of his ministry and theirs is the way of the cross. Peter had just confessed Jesus to be the Christ, but now he cannot accept the idea of the Christ being put to death. Jesus calls Peter “Satan” because his words represent a temptation to him. Jesus’ way costs no less than everything and leads to the discovery of that which is priceless. In the end the Son of Man will come as judge to repay all people for what they have done.

Hear now these words from the Gospel of Matthew

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life<sup>[a]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

**All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.**